

Hi-Q

Journal of the Lakehead Amateur Radio Club

PREZ SEZ...

Welcome to the February issue of Hi-Q. A few things to report. Three exciting events are the I-500 which ran from Minneapolis back to Thunder Bay on the 2nd 3rd and 4th, the Hamfest in Minneapolis on the 8th and last but not least the annual dinner in March.

For out of town members and guys who spend very little time on 2 Meters, we've had the new repeater up and running for 3 months now. From the reports the new VE3YQT is out-performing our expectations. Hams are getting "phone patch" quality signals with handhelds from laces that were formerly "in the boondies". Try it out if you get a chance, you'll be surprised. We have also purchased a pre-amp for YQT so stand by for even better performance. As with anything in Amateur Radio, nothing is ever perfect or complete. There are still be some changes to be made, and a problem still persists in getting our own dedicated phone line. A lot has yet to be done with the mail and speed dial features. Stay tuned, we'll let you know as developments occur. Something under consideration now, is a Digital Voice Recorder (DVR) which will make the message centre and the voice ID light years better. As a means of providing a handy reference of all the new features soon to be available, Dave (VE3DOM et. al.) suggested the use of a small laminated wallet card.

The "old" VE3YQT has been removed and is awaiting repackaging into a smaller more portable cabinet and a future that is uncertain at this point. Stay tuned...

73...Mark, VE3VUK.

Amateur Radio Across the Pond.

If you are planning a trip to the United Kingdom and expect to use your Ham equipment, plan ahead. It will take several weeks to arrange reciprocal licensing by mail. Allow at least six weeks and remember to provide proof of your Canadian license.

Mail your application to:

Radio Amateur Licensing Unit,
Chetwynd House,
Chesterfield, Derbyshire,
S49 1PF
England.

Band Use Conventions.

A smaller 2 M band plan is in use in the U.K. Frequency limits are strictly enforced and limited to 144.000 MHz to 148.000 MHz. FM simplex frequencies are found between 145.275 MHz. to 145.575 MHz. and the FM calling frequency is 145.500 MHz.

As with amateurs in Canada and all over the world, a gentlemans agreement exists stipulating operating procedures within the Ham bands. Very similar to what exists here in VE land. It is often said though that in U.K. the regular Hams use 2M for mobile and portable QSOs and local rag chewing while 70 cm is used by gentlemen.

Using UK Repeaters.

An extensive 2 meter network has been developed intended for use mainly by portable and mobile stations. The following notes should help repeater users get the most out of the network:

(Continued on page 2.)

SPARKS, ABOARD JAMES WHALEN

The fall months on the Great lakes were noted for furious and dangerous storms. Many a good ship foundered and crews were lost.

Ships and sailing always fascinated me and for two separate year long seasons I served as Sparks aboard the James Whalen and a laker, the S. S. Bayton. The following, which occurred over sixty years ago, are some of the more interesting episodes aboard the James Whalen. *Editorial note. Because of space limitations we are saving Les's Bayton experiences for a future issue.*

The icebreaker James Whalen was based at Port Arthur, Ontario. During the spring she broke ice, opening the harbour, she provided access to the grain elevator slips. Once the port had been opened she transported light keepers to the various light houses along the north shore of Lake Superior. In the fall the rounds were repeated when the light keepers were picked up and returned to the mainland. Extra crew put aboard the Whalen during these periods included the Government Marine Agent, Captain Dwyer and a wireless operator.

The radio gear consisted of an ancient quenched gap transmitter and an equally ancient companion valve receiver (tube) located in the main cabin, *(See accompanying photo)* which was often crowded with light keepers and their wives.

When I joined the Whalen, the Radio

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Amateur Radio... Continued from page 1.

1. Keep transmissions (or "Overs" in Britain) as short as possible. This avoids timing out. The interval varies between repeaters, and while some do not time out, most will in two to three minutes.

2. Do not remain on the repeater if simplex is a workable option. A quick check on the input frequency will indicate simplex possibilities.

3. Do try to determine the repeater working characteristics, ie:- the time out period, the re-access method, etc.

4. Wait for the "K" or end of "over" signal before starting your next over to prevent time outs.

5. Be warned, four London repeaters (NL, SL, and EL, with the worst being EL) are sometimes plagued with idiots (or IQ-0 stations). Profanity, expletives, music, jamming etc. can often be heard. Listening can be fun and sometimes hilarious, but of course if traveling with your family you may not want them exposed to the R rated (or worse) stuff.

Accessing.

The logic control of repeaters vary and all variations cannot be listed here. In general, the following method should enable contacts.

Standard procedure to open a repeater is a 17.50 Hz. tone for no less than 500 ms. followed immediately by 5 seconds of speech modulation. If the repeater has been opened, either by yourself or another station, a QSO can be achieved, provided that the repeater does not drop out ie: time out. If this occurs then a 17.50 Hz. tone followed by 5 seconds of speech must again be employed. Once initiated the repeater may be kept open by waiting for the "K", not exceeding the time out period and continuing the QSO. The logic will keep resetting the timer automatically without the use of the 17.50 Hz. tone. If your North American equipment can

not easily be modified to transmit the 17.50 Hz. tone, the required sound can be produced by whistling. Believe me, it can and has been done.

Amateur repeaters must be club operated and are assigned the prefix GB3 followed by a unique two letter suffix, ie: GB3SR. Repeater frequencies are limited to one of seven assigned frequency combinations within a group and all use a -600 kHz. input down split. Table 1 (See page 4) provides repeater group numbers, assigned frequencies and each call sign suffix related to its group assignment. Note that new repeaters may have been added since this data was obtained.

Amateurs travelling throughout the U.K. with the exceptions of Northern Scotland and the northern regions of south west England are always within reach of at least one repeater. Often the traveller has a choice of several. If your location and conditions are favorable many continental European repeaters can be heard and successfully worked.

Figure 1 (See page 4) is a sketch of the U.K. showing call sign prefixes and approximate repeater locations by their GB3 suffix identification letters. The map also indicates regional prefixes used throughout Great Britain. If I were to travel from central England to Scotland for example my call would change from G8VCO to GM8VCO. Call signs also, in general, indicate an individuals license qualification, but more on that in a future article. For the moment though you should be aware that visiting hams granted reciprocal licensing privileges are assigned the prefix GB5.

Remember that all repeaters are built maintained and financed by amateurs for the benefit of all amateurs. So support your local repeater group.

For further details regarding U.K. repeaters both operational and proposed write to:

R.S.G.B

Alma House

Cranborne Road

Potters Bar

Hertfordshire EN6 3JW

England.

Note if you plan to visit the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) for an "eyeball", their call in frequency is in repeater group R7 through repeater GB3NL (North London) and their call sign is GB3HQ. They may be on frequency, if not, someone will respond to requests for directions.

U.K. Regulations.

Remember: no person other than a licensed member of a group shall use amateur radio, (If your travelling companion is not a licenced amateur don't let his or her voice be transmitted over the air.) no phone patch, no dual or multiple tone signaling to the repeater, no voice ID, etc. etc. etc.; so why would you go there anyway? But if you do, have a safe trip and enjoy.

73s...Brian, VE3UKX (Formerly G8VCO/VE3)

CONGRATULATIONS, BRIAN.

*Editors note: - **WARNING** - Artistic license was employed in preparing Figure 1. LARC (Officers and otherwise) will refuse all claims for responsibility for any and all losses resulting from use of this sketch for navigational purposes.*

BALLOON ADVENTURE!

Looking for something different on shortwave? Listen on 28,303 MHz. You may hear digitized voice position reports from a balloon attempting to float around the world.

BUYING, SELLING OR TRADING; LET US KNOW. WE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP!

parks... Continued from page 1.

Inspector inspected the wireless gear to ensure the set was in compliance with Government Regulations. Captain Burke was Master and Chief Engineer was Gale. I believe Captain Burke was a superstitious man, because one night, Friday the 13th, we remained at dockside. The Whalen did not slip its moorings until Saturday the 14th, just after midnight.

Another time we became hung up on a submerged reef. The weather was good with only a slight swell. One thought crossed my mind, "Would I be sending my first S.O.S.?" That, however, was the Skipper's worry, because only he has the authority to have a distress message transmitted. The skipper shut down the engine, the only sounds heard were from the ship bumping on the rocks, then we slowly drifted clear of the reef.

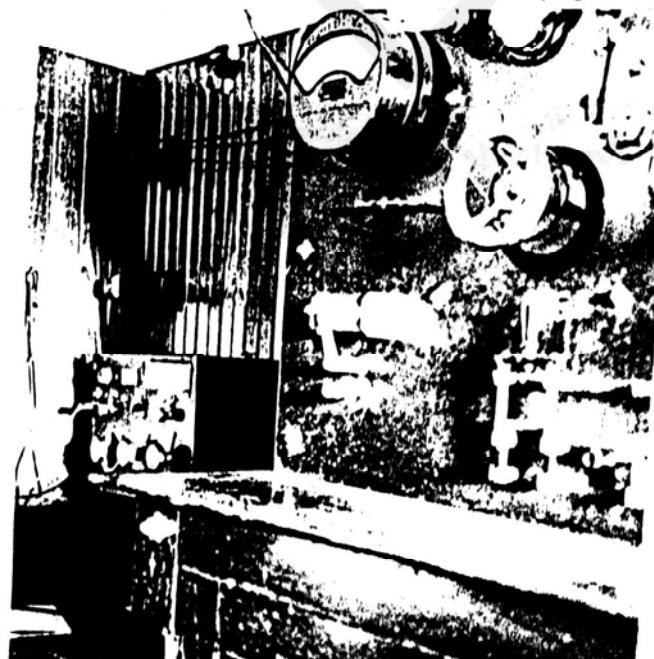
Have you ever been seasick? I was once. We were taking the light keepers to their stations. I had just finished a good hearty meal when Captain Dwyer, the Marine Agent passed around a large box of cigars. The cabin was soon full of blue smoke. The sea was very rough, and sitting there in front of the wireless gear I wished I was somewhere else.

Suddenly I felt I must get outside at once, and dashed for the door with one of the crew right behind me. Leaning over the side, while he held on to my belt, I fed the fishes and let the spray clean my face. These quick dashes occurred a number of times with occasional interruptions when, following dropping off a light keeper, the Marine Agent gave me a message to send to VBA Port Arthur.

Later, in the fall, we picked up the U.S. light keepers from Passage Island, located east of Isle Royal. Again Captain Dwyer and I shared a cabin. He had the lower bunk and I the upper. Before retiring, I left the cabin port hole open. During the night the sea became rough and spray came through the open port hole soaking the Marine Agents bunk, while mine remained high and dry. I had a comfortable nights sleep. Captain Dwyer may have pulled rank, as he took over another cabin while the former occupant sought his rest elsewhere.

Another fall night on Lake Superior, the weather was very poor with sleet and rain and there was a heavy sea running. I heard a Belguim ship attempting contact with the Duluth

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There's An Active BBS

Right Here In Thunder Bay!

VE3TKA BBS first went out over the air waves on the 29th of April 1991. As of 2308 hours 28 Jan 92, Terry has amassed the following impressive statistics:

Total Connects - 14,389Avg.,

Number of Connects per Day - 52,

Avg. connect duration - 14 min. 55sec.,

On Air Time (HF & VHF) - 780 Min. or 13 Hrs./Day; and

Busiest Period - 0900 to 1000 Hours.

Keep up the good work, Terry!! It's appreciated!!

ED SEZ...

Another issue to press! As usual I'm bleary eyed, but I've got Jim to keep me propped up in the chair. The I-500 was a successful operation, except for a few minor glitches. Let's keep in mind why we do these things. Firstly, our Constitution states that we will assist the community, and secondly, it's practice for the real emergencies. Thanks to all who took part. Classes are progressing and Brian VE3UKX (G8VCO) is our first graduate of the year. I hope his success spurs on those hesitating to write. If he can do it....

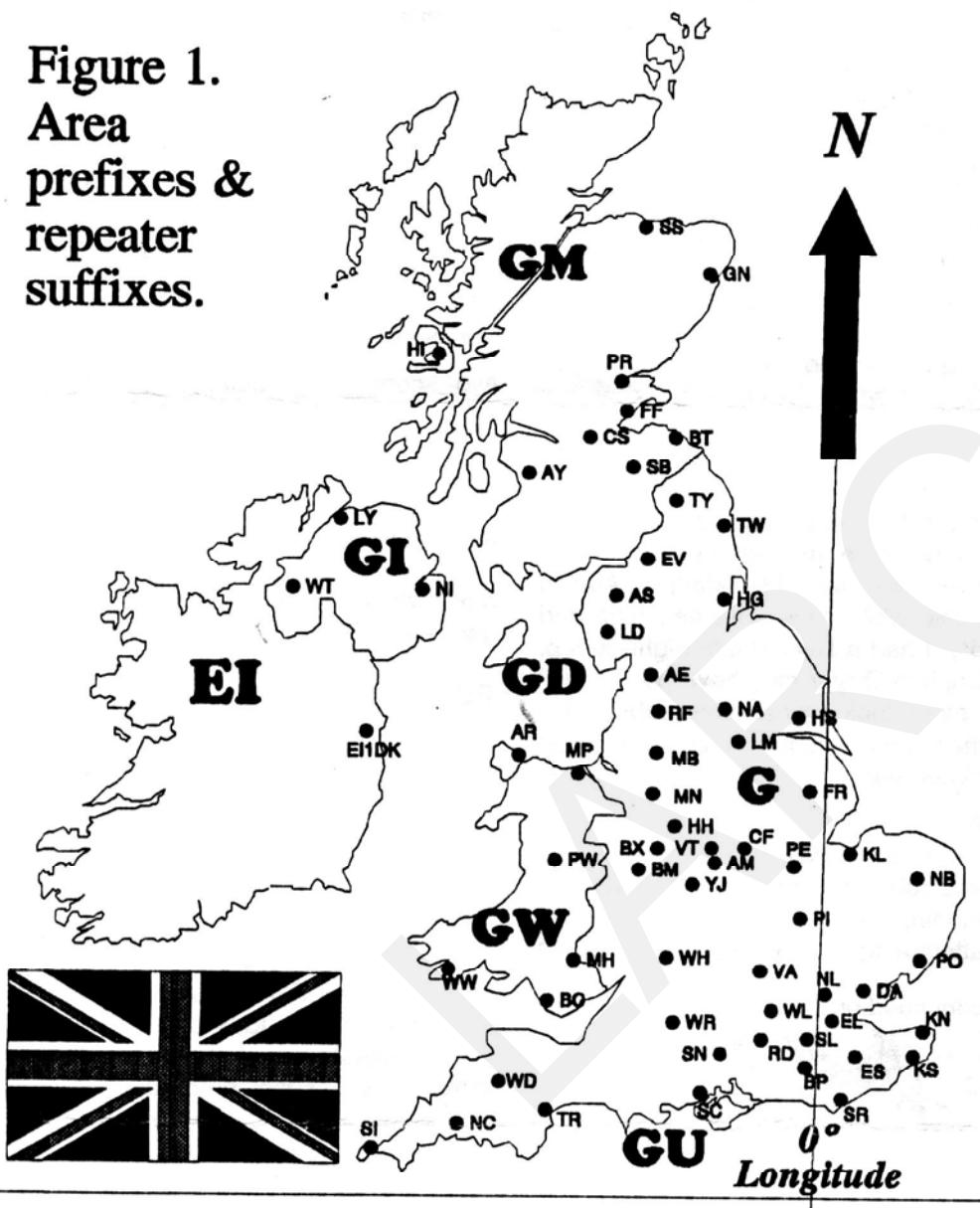
See you at the dinner in march, rumour has it a certain weather prognosticator shall regale us.

73 - Ed VE3SNW &

Jim O'Brien

THIS SPACE
CAN BE
YOURS.

Figure 1.
Area prefixes &
repeater suffixes.



GROUP INPUT	OUTPUT	SATAION SUFFIX
R0	145.000	145.600 CF, EL, FF, LY, MB, SS, WR
R1	145.025	145.625 AS, HG, KS, NB, SC, SI, VT, WL,
R2	145.050	145.650 AY, BX, HS, MN, SB, SL, KL, TR, WH, WD
R3	145.075	145.675 LD, MH, RD, SR, PO, NA, PR, PW
R4	145.100	145.700 AR, BT, EV, HH, HI, KN, VA
R5	145.125	145.725 AE, BM, DA, LM, NC, NI, SN, TW
R6	145.150	145.750 AM, BC, CS, BP, MP, OS, PI, TY

Table 1. U.K. Repeater Group Frequencies and Station Suffixes.

Sparks... continued from page 3.

Coast Guard, but his C.W. signal was breaking up. Thinking I might provide assistance, I cranked up my quenched gap transmitter. The noise from the generator and the quenched gap was really something to hear. Sweet music to the operator. Captain Burkes cabin was directly above the equipment and he was trying to sleep. He dressed, came down to the shack, pounded on my desk and in plain but colorful, seamans language told me to immediately shut off the transmitter or "...He would throw me overboard." He was not very polite. I guess I was the only wireless operator on the Great Lakes a Captain threatened to throw overboard.

On another occasion, still aboard the Whalen, but now with Captain Morrison in command, we left Port Arthur to pick up a towed barge off Grand Marais. It was a very dark nigh however, and so after causing around searching for her without success, the Whalen took a berth at dockside at the Grand Marias Coast Guard Station. Soon the U.S. Custom and Immigration Inspectors came aboard and quickly discovered that Captain Morrison had neglected to obtain his clearance papers before departing. The Whalen crew were interviewed by the U.S. Officers. I remember one question asked of me, "How much money did I have in my pockets?" Now I did have some money and would have enjoyed visiting Grand Marais, but the whole crew was ordered to remain aboard the Whalen. The Skipper did not look very happy. Lets draw a curtain over that voyage.

73,

Les Harris, VE3AYZ.

Stay tuned for more adventures. Next time, aboard S.S. Bayton.